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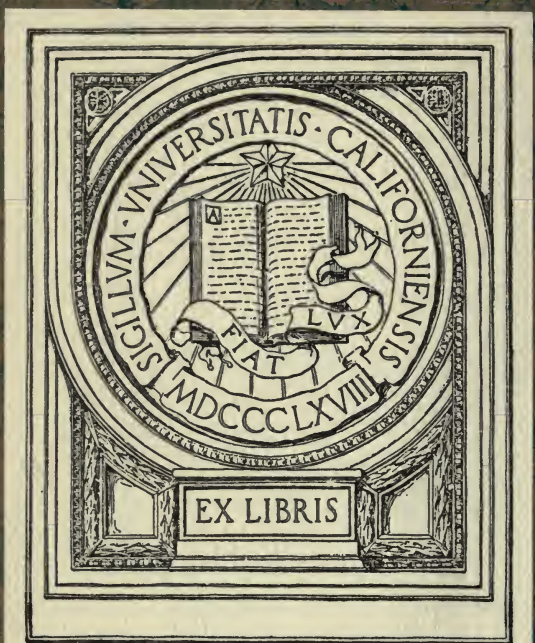

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William Clark: Soldier, Explorer, Statesman.

By REUBEN GOLD THWAITES, LL.D.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT ST. LOUIS, 22 SEPTEMBER, 1906, ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNVEILING OF A TABLET TO THE MEMORY OF GOVERNOR CLARK.

(REPRINTED FROM VOL. 2, NO. 7, OF THE MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS.)

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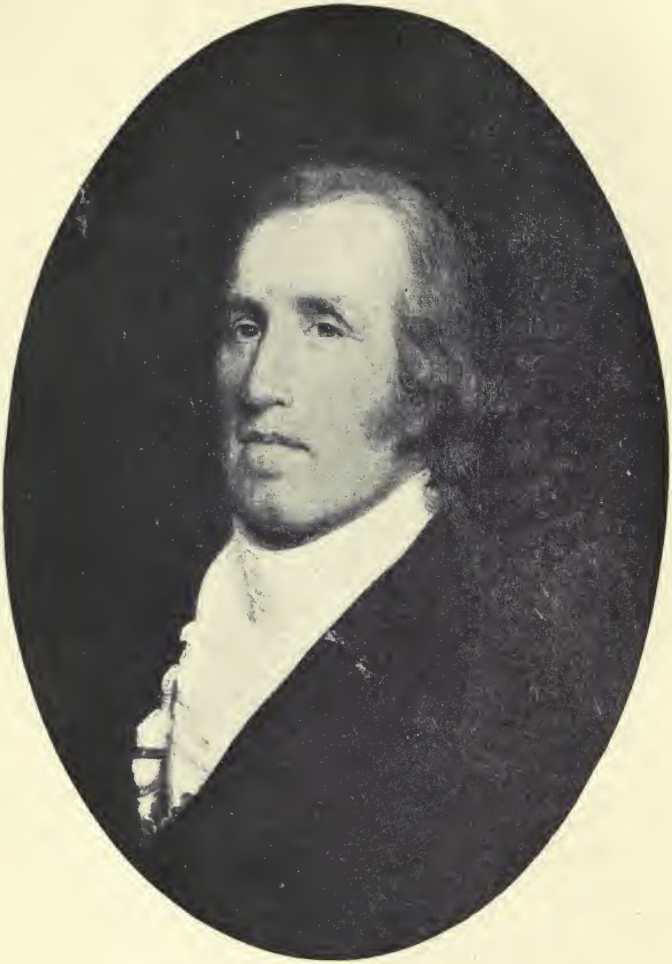

Wm Clark

19893

[Reprinted from Vol. 2, No. 7, of the Missouri Historical Society Collections.]

WILLIAM CLARK: SOLDIER, EXPLORER, STATESMAN.[1]

BY REUBEN GOLD THWAITES, LL.D.

About the year 1630, a trifle less than a quarter of a century after the planting of Jamestown colony, one John Clark, a recent immigrant from England, settled upon the

[1] On Saturday, 22 September, 1906, on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the return of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, there was unveiled in St. Louis a bronze tablet to the memory of William Clark. The tablet, the gift of the National Bank of Commerce in St. Louis, is placed upon the Broadway front of the bank building, which occupies the site of the dwelling house of Meriwether Lewis Clark. This house was the home of Governor Clark in his later years. The inscription on the tablet is: —

HERE LIVED AND DIED

William Clark,

1770–1838

OF THE

Lewis and Clark Expedition,

SOLDIER, EXPLORER, TERRITORIAL GOVERNOR, SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

ERECTED SEPTEMBER 23, 1906.

THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RETURN OF THE EXPEDITION.

The designing and erection of the tablet was done under the direction of the Civic League of St. Louis, which inspired the gift. The safe keeping of the tablet is committed to the Missouri Historical Society.

James River in Virginia. We have little knowledge of his antecedents in the Old World, but he himself appears soon to have become a successful tobacco planter; his descendants were colonials of considerable social and political prominence, and affiliated by marriage with some of the best blood of Virginia.

Americans of the seventeenth century, especially those south of New England, were not wide travellers. Roads were crude, bridges few, settlements and even farmsteads wide apart — practically none stirred far from home, save officials, land speculators, fur-traders, raisers of half-wild forest cattle, and a few well-to-do young fellows in whose veins strongly coursed the *wanderlust* of our Teutonic race, and who must have their outing before settling down into the humdrum of business, professional, or plantation life. A few years after his settlement John Clark appears to have made what was then a notable journey into the neighboring colony of Maryland, where he wooed and married "a red-haired Scotch lady" who had relatives in the Virginia county of King and Queen, wherein was Clark's evidently small plantation.[1] In later marriages, during successive generations of Clarks, Scotch and Scotch-Irish blood was freely mingled with the pure English strain that John Clark had brought to the James — a fusion

The unveiling was under the joint auspices of the Civic League and the Historical Society. The programme was as follows: —

"The unveiling of the tablet by Miss Marie Christy Church, great-great-granddaughter of General Clark, at 2:30 p. m., September 22d, corner of Olive street and Broadway.

Commemorative Exercises in Memorial Hall at 8 p. m.,
Henry T. Kent, President of the Civic League, presiding.

Presentation of Tablet . . . J. C. Van Blarcom,
President National Bank of Commerce.

Acceptance of Tablet . . . Judge Walter B. Douglas,
on behalf of Missouri Historical Society.

Address: William Clark, Soldier, Explorer, Statesman.
Dr. Reuben G. Thwaites."

The address of Dr. Thwaites is herewith given. Editor's Note.

[1] Correspondence of Col. John O'Fallon, of St. Louis, quoted in Draper MS. 1J37, in Wisconsin Historical Library.

such as has given to the history of American pioneering heroes and heroines for many of its most glowing chapters.

This John Clark, great-grandfather of George Rogers and William, left one son, who in due course married, but early departed this life, leaving a widow and two sons, John 2d and Jonathan. In 1725 the latter married Elizabeth Wilson, the daughter of an English Quaker settler of King and Queen County. Nine years later he in turn died, survived by a well-provided family of two sons and two daughters, of whom the oldest child was John 3d (born October 9, 1726), father of the man whose services to civilization we have to-day formally recognized.[1]

John 3d married (1749) his second cousin, Ann Rogers — "an amiable young lady of about sixteen," an old chronicler tells us — who on her mother's side was related to the celebrated Byrd family of Westover. John and Ann began their career in a rude cabin topping a height of ground on the western frontier of Albemarle County, quite near the plantation of Mrs. Clark's elder brother, John Rogers, who had explored that region as early as 1712; and within a mile of Monticello, in later years to become the home of Thomas Jefferson. Here were born the first four of their ten children — Jonathan (1750), George Rogers (1752), Ann (1755), and John 4th (1757).

In 1757 occurred the death of Mr. Clark's uncle, John 2d, who had remained a bachelor and bequeathed to his namesake and favorite nephew his large farm in the southwestern corner of Caroline County. Thither the family of John 3d at once removed, and their six other children were natives of the new seat — Richard (1760), Edmund (1762), Lucy (1765), Elizabeth (1768), William (August 1, 1770), and Frances (1773).

John and Ann Rogers Clark appeared to have been a thrifty couple. According to the simple eighteenth century standards of the Virginia frontier they were well-to-do,

[1] The widow of Jonathan Clark subsequently married one Richards, whom she survived. About 1783, when at an advanced age, she died at the residence of her son, John 3d, in Caroline County.

although doubtless many a Western farmer of our day would consider himself to have won but a fair competence had he only the fortune of our hero's parents. After the manner of borderers, the children obtained but the most elementary education; reared to hard work at home, they also had a full knowledge of woodcraft, for their fields were still girt about by jungles, and not far distant were dense forests darkly mantling the eastern slopes of the Alleghenies; cattle, horses, and hogs were pastured on the rich mast of the foothills, and after the annual round-up driven in herds to distant seaboard markets; guarding the mountain passes and the west-flowing waters beyond, were fierce tribes of Indians, visited only by wandering fur-traders, hunters, and occasionally a venturesome missionary or an exploring surveyor, or now and then by a punitive expedition of the free-and-easy border militia.

When William was two years of age (1772), his elder brother George Rogers Clark, then a young surveyor and well-equipped borderman, made his first exploration down the Ohio River. Thus William grew up familiar with the ways of the woods, with long hunting trips, with Indian fighters, of whom there were several in his own family, and with thoughts of venturesome deeds far beyond the fretted sky-line of the Alleghenies that gave bound to Virginia on the west.

In the month of October, 1784, five years after George Rogers Clark, the most famous of all the sons of John Clark 3d, had valorously won for American arms the country beyond the Ohio, and the year following the confirmation of that conquest by the treaty of Paris, his parents and most of his brothers and sisters, born frontier folk, took up their line of march from Virginia for the newer land of Kentucky. Their route lay along the over-mountain path from the Potomac to the Monongahela, that had been moistened by the blood of Washington's men at Fort Necessity and by Braddock's at the Turtle Creek crossing. Winter chanced to set in early, so that on their arrival the Monongahela was found to be choked with ice. With

other Western emigrants the Clarks tarried at Pittsburgh until the February thaw, when re-embarking they descended to Louisville (then known as the Falls of the Ohio), reaching that far-off Western outpost early in March. The new seat of the Clarks was attractively located at Mulberry Hill, on Beargrass Creek — three miles south of George Rogers Clark's rude fort at Louisville, with its cordon of log huts for the settlers — and here John Clark died fourteen years later (July 29, 1799); his aged wife, Ann, having passed away several months previous (December, 1798.)

Thus in his fifteenth year William Clark became a Kentuckian. The life at Mulberry Hill was quite similar to that on the Virginia uplands, save that frontier conditions were more evident. The Clark home was a centre of hospitality and sociability for the entire region. Under the roof-tree at Mulberry Hill were frequently entertained sturdy pioneers of the Kentucky movement, bringing their tales of Indian warfare and other perils and hardships of the early days; and the second generation of Kentucky immigrants also found here a welcome — gentlemen and lawyers of the new settlements, Revolutionary soldiers seeking homes in the growing West, men of enterprise, culture, and promise, permanent founders of a new civilization.

Among them all, a marked favorite was young "Billy," whose large and powerful frame was capped by a full, broad face, profoundly serious in composure, yet lit by kindly, sympathetic eyes that were windows to a persistent, dauntless soul. His thick shock of red hair eloquently bespoke his great-grandfather's Maryland wooing. But his own words were few; his reputation being that of a youth who accomplished things, rather than talked of them. Frequently he was a member of war parties against the still troublesome aborigines. He had but entered on his seventeenth year when we find him enlisted in the Wabash expedition under his elder brother, now General George Rogers Clark. Three years later (1789), he joined Colonel

John Hardin's unfortunate enterprise against the tribesmen north of the Ohio, that met with at least one success, the spirited defeat of the enemy on White River.

In 1790 young Clark served the federal government by undertaking a dangerous mission to the Southern Indians, when the Creeks and Cherokees were giving trouble. The season following (spring and summer of 1791), on reaching his majority, he was commissioned as ensign and acting lieutenant, and served in the successive Wabash Indian campaigns of Generals Scott and Wilkinson. "Your brother William," writes one of the family friends,[1] "is gone out as a cadet with Gen. Scott, on the expedition. He is a youth of solid and promising parts, and as brave as Cæsar."

Two years later (March 19, 1793), we find him commissioned as a first lieutenant of riflemen in the Fourth sublegion, in General Anthony Wayne's Western Army. After being engaged as an engineer in constructing forts along the line of advance, he was, late in the season, dispatched upon a perilous and tedious expedition up the Wabash as far as Vincennes, during which his soldiers were for some time obliged to depend on their rifles for supplies, while for twenty days their progress was blocked by ice.

Returning to Fort Washington (Cincinnati) in the spring of 1794, Clark, — who, although holding but a lieutenant's commission, frequently commanded a company — was promptly ordered to escort to Fort Greenville seven hundred packhorses laden with supplies for the army. Attacked by the savages (May 13), he lost six men killed and two wounded, but gallantly repulsed the enemy and elicited praise from Wayne,[2] under whom he

[1] Dr. James O'Fallon to Colonel Jonathan Clark, May 30, 1791; in Draper, MSS., 2L28.

[2] In a letter to his brother, General Jonathan Clark, dated May 31, 1794, Lieutenant Clark complains that the commander-in-chief in his public order wrongly attributes to Lieutenant Turner, a passenger in the expedition, and under-ranking Clark, more laurels than to the latter, who considered himself as entitled to full credit.

later (August 20) won distinction by leading the left column of riflemen in the Battle of Fallen Timbers. During this campaign he also acted as adjutant and quartermaster to the legion.

In 1795 Wayne sent Clark with a message to the Spanish authorities at New Madrid, protesting against the erection of a fort at the Chickasaw Bluffs. It is said that they were much impressed by the dignity and soldierly bearing of the young lieutenant who was so soon to be planning for the exploration of their vast trans-Mississippi possessions. The following summer, in his twenty-sixth year, he resigned his commission and retired from the army (July 1, 1796), because of ill health — apparently with the brevet rank of captain, for thereafter he was given that title.

Clark's four years' service in the Western Army had been of a character to bring fresh honors to the Clark name, had he done no more. He had become familiar with the methods of handling and retaining the respect of large bodies of frontiersmen under military discipline; his store of courage and resource had been tested to the full in dealing with savage foes; he had acquired experience on diplomatic missions; he had been in touch with the prominent men of his time. But most significant and far-reaching of all, he was for several months previous to his resignation thrown into intimate companionship with Meriwether Lewis, four years his junior, whom he had doubtless known as a boy in Virginia, and who — in the capacity of an ensign assigned to his company — was now his fellow campaigner.[1]

Captain William Clark became, in his retirement, a young country gentleman, and at first, after recovering his health, placidly occupied himself with the business of his now aged father's estate. When the latter died, Mulberry Hill fell to William's share. But with these rustic duties were soon mingled the management of the tangled affairs of his famous

[1] See Clark's letter to Nicholas Biddle, dated St. Louis August 15, 1811, in Coues, *Lewis and Clark Expedition* (N. Y., 1893), i, pp. lxxi, lxxii.

brother, George Rogers Clark, which henceforth occupied much of his attention. Vexatious suits were brought against the hero of Vincennes, for supplies furnished to his troops during the Revolutionary War; and to meet these William Clark, self-sacrificingly loyal to his brother's interests, parted with a large share of his own possessions, even the ancestral seat of Mulberry Hill. As some measure of compensation, General Clark conveyed to William 65,000 acres of land below the mouth of Tennessee River; in later years, when this tract became valuable, the latter shared it with other members of the family.

William Clark's affairs were in this condition when, in his thirty-third year, a momentous letter reached him (July 16, 1803), from his old comrade and subordinate in Wayne's army, now Captain Meriwether Lewis of the First Infantry, and lately private secretary to President Jefferson. This communication, dated Washington, June 19, gave confidential information of Lewis's projected exploring expedition through Spanish territory to the Pacific Ocean, under Jefferson's auspices, and Clark was invited to "participate with me in its fatiegues, its dangers and its honors." The young Kentucky Cincinnatus was cordially assured by his still younger friend-at-arms that "there is no man on earth with whom I should feel equal pleasure in sharing them as with yourself." [1]

It will be seen that owing to the slowness of Western mails, Lewis's letter was all but a month in reaching Kentucky. Failing to hear from his friend as soon as he had expected, and fearing that this might mean that he was unable to go, Lewis had meanwhile opened tentative negotiations with Lieutenant Moses Hooke of his own regiment, then in charge of military stores at Pittsburgh. When Lewis's letter arrived, Captain Clark was at his brother George Rogers's estate at Clarksville, Indiana, on the north side of the Ohio river, opposite Louisville, and the following day (July 17) he accepted the offer with

[1] See correspondence in full in Thwaites, *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (New York, 1904–5), Vol. VII.

Most cordially yours,
Reuben G. Thwaites

enthusiasm. "This is," he wrote, "an imense undertaking fraited with numerous dificulties, but my friend I can assure you that no man lives with whom I would prefer to undertake and share the Dificulties of such a trip than yourself."

The circumstances under which this proposed exploration towards the Pacific was undertaken are, in this centennial annniversary period, doubtless familiar to all of us. But for the sake of continuous narrative it is necessary, even at the expense of bringing historical coals to this Newcastle, briefly to recount them. Jolliet and Marquette (1673) had first hoped that the Mississippi might be found emptying into the Pacific; but on ascertaining that its flood was received by the Gulf of Mexico, they looked upon the Missouri as the undoubted highway to the Ocean of the West. There was, indeed, a widely-prevalent tradition among aborigines living upon the Mississippi, that the Missouri sprung from a low-lying watershed that might easily be portaged to some stream emptying into the Pacific. Even at the opening of the eighteenth century, charts published in Europe showed west-flowing waters interlocking with the Missouri. Several French expeditions were organized for exploring the Missouri and some of its lower affluents — La Harpe and Du Tisné (1719), De Bourgmont (1722), and Mallet (1739); but they accomplished little more than obtaining a knowledge of the country for a few hundred miles above its mouth, with side ventures upon the South Fork of the Platte, the Arkansas, and the plains stretching southwestward to the Spanish seat of Santa Fé.

Upon the eve of the downfall of New France, the crafty Louis XV, in order to prevent England from obtaining them, ceded to Spain (November, 1762), the town and neighborhood of New Orleans and the broad possessions of France west of the Mississippi, the so-called Province of Louisiana. But the Spaniards who came to the two capitals, New Orleans and St. Louis, were in the main only soldiers and public officials. French *habitants* occupied

their little waterside villages, as of old; being joined in the closing decade of the century by Kentuckians like Daniel Boone, who, weary of the legal and social restraints of growing American settlements, were willing to accept Spanish land grants with their promise of a return to primitive conditions, in which farming alternated with hunting. French trappers, many of them blood relatives of the red men, and now released from the tyranny of the fur-trade monopoly of New France, freely plied their nomadic calling upon the lower reaches of the Missouri and its branches, and even up the Platte and Arkansas to the bases of the Rockies. French and half-breed fur-traders — either on their own account, or as agents of the warring British companies of the Canadian wilds, the Hudson's Bay and the North West — wandered far and near among the tribesmen, visiting them in their permanent villages and accompanying them upon hunting, fishing, and war parties. Their long journeyings by land and water occasionally carried them as far afield as the great northern bend of the Missouri, where were the villages of the trade-loving Mandans, who bartered indiscriminately with Gauls from St. Louis and Britons from the Assiniboin.

In California, Spanish missions to the Indians had by the opening of our Revolutionary War extended as far north as San Francisco and Monterey. Spanish mariners, seeking vainly for a transcontinental waterway that should furnish a short route between Spain and India, had by this time become familiar with the Northwest Coast up to the modern Sitka, and developed a considerable trade with the natives, chiefly at Nootka Sound, on the western shore of Vancouver's Island; while adventurous Spanish missionaries had contemporaneously penetrated eastward to the Great Basin. Russian trading vessels had ventured southward from Alaska to Nootka Sound. In 1778 Captain Cook touched the Northwest Coast on his third voyage around the world; and by 1785 traders of several nations — English, American, Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese —

were plying these waters in a world-wide commerce for furs, and rapidly extending a knowledge of our Western shores and of their savage inhabitants.

Such was the situation when Thomas Jefferson — philosopher, seer, statesman — always interested in the Middle West, first felt within him yearnings for a more intimate knowledge of the vast country lying beyond the Mississippi River. That the Province of Louisiana belonged to Spain, gave him no pause; he felt that so long as British traders from Canada were exploiting the trans-Mississippi interior, Americans might be excused for opening through this wilderness a trade route to the Pacific, and incidentally extending the bounds of human knowledge in geography and the natural sciences.

In 1783, he proposed such an expedition to George Rogers Clark,[1] but nothing came of the suggestion. Three years later, when American minister to Paris, he arranged with the adventureous John Ledyard, of Connecticut, who had been with Captain Cook around the globe, to penetrate to the Missouri from the west, and descend that stream to the American settlements; but Ledyard's enterprise came to grief through his arrest in Kamschatka by agents of the Russian crown, which looked askance at American operations on the Northwest Coast. Captain John Armstrong in 1790 attempted to ascend the Missouri, under orders from the War Department at Washington, but failed because of the hostility of the Missouri tribes. In 1793 — the year following Captain Robert Gray's discovery of the mouth of the Columbia — Jefferson, acting as a vice-president of the American Philosophical Society, dispatched upon this same mission André Michaux, a distinguished French botanist then herborizing in the United States. Michaux tarried in Kentucky to conduct a French political intrigue with George Rogers Clark and other disaffected borderers, who were planning a filibustering expedition

[1] The original MS. of this letter is among the Draper MSS. (press-mark, 52J93), in the Wisconsin Historical Library.

against the Spanish of Louisiana, with the result that his project of exploration was abandoned. [1]

When Jefferson became president of the United States, perhaps a score of American trading vessels were annually visiting Nootka Sound and the mouth of the Columbia; British overland traders were, as we have seen, operating among the Mandan Indians and their tribal neighbors, at or below the great bend of the Missouri; French and half-breed trappers and traders, together with a few expatriated Kentuckians, were familiar with the Missouri and its lower affluents; upon St. Peter's River (now the Minnesota), British free-traders were profitably bartering with the Sioux, a circumstance causing much uneasiness among Americans of the Middle West. As yet, few citizens of the United States were engaged in the exploitation of the trans-Mississippi, which Napoleon, dreaming of another New France in North America, had now (October 1, 1800) obliged Spain to retrocede to him, although he had not thus far taken formal possession of the country.

President Jefferson had not forgotten his early dreams of exploring the Far West. In the winter of 1802–03, the opportunity was presented of again pushing the scheme, this time with the greater influence attendant upon his exalted position. An "act for establishing trading houses with the Indian tribes" had lapsed, and he urged Congress in a secret message to reach out for the trade of the Missouri River Indians, suggesting an exploring party as the best means of accomplishing this object.

He recognized that the country which he thus proposed to enter had recently become the property of France, although still governed by Spain; but thought that the European powers would not object to an enterprise cloaked "as a literary pursuit." Congress acceded to his wish, and appropriated $2,500 to carry the project into effect. This amount seems amusingly small; but contemporary

[1] See documents connected with these several projects, in Thwaites, *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, Appendix, Vol. VII.

documents[1] abundantly prove that Jefferson intended that the exploring party should, while still east of the Mississippi River, be subsisted by the War Department, as a military enterprise. In addition thereto he issued in their favor a general letter of credit, which while it proved of no avail, further demonstrates the fact that the enterprise was not expected to confine itself to the appropriation.

The story of the expedition of Lewis and Clark is so familiar a tale in our day, that we need not here dwell at length upon it. Lewis, who in 1803 was but twenty-nine years of age, had won an excellent reputation in the Western Army, and as Jefferson's private secretary shown himself a man of affairs, thoroughly imbued with common sense, and much of a diplomat. The President had at first wished that a scientist might lead the party; but just then no such person was available who at the same time understood the Indian, was an adept in camp life, could govern a company of frontiersmen, and possessed the physique necessary for an enterprise of this hardy character. Lewis sought, in some measure, to overcome his deficiency on the scientific side by taking brief but evidently strenuous lessons from eminent scientists of his day, especially regarding the use of the crude astronomical instruments then in vogue, and the making of geological, natural history, and ethnological notes.

Clark, in his thirty-third year, furnished not only a knowledge of aborigines and wild life generally, quite the equal of his friend's, but for his day was a competent engineer and facile draughtsman, qualifications as essential to the undertaking as the necessarily superficial scientific training of Lewis; he also proved much the better boatman of the two, and to him apparently was in large measure assigned the difficult task of training the men.

Preparations were quite complete — Lewis was ready to

[1] Given in full in Appendix (Vol. VII) to *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.*

start from Washington, Clark had already enlisted a number of young Kentucky riflemen, boats for the Ohio River trip and supplies had been ordered and were assembling at Pittsburgh, Jefferson had issued his final detailed instructions, and permits had been obtained from both French and Spanish officials who, however, had small notion of what the expedition meant — when a new phase was given to the enterprise. On the second of May, 1803, American commissioners had, quite without authority for so important a transaction, signed a treaty with Napoleon by which Louisiana was sold to the United States, France having three years previously secretly obtained the province from Spain. Some inkling of the Louisiana Purchase had certainly reached Washington by the middle of June, for Lewis privately mentioned it in his invitation to Clark; but official confirmation was not received until July 14, by which time Lewis had nearly reached Pittsburgh, prepared to descend the Ohio with his little flotilla. Thus the expedition was on its feet and would surely have marched, despite European ownership of the trans-Mississippi. News of the transfer of sovereignty wrought no other change, save that the secrecy heretofore maintained was no longer necessary.

At Louisville, Clark joined Lewis with his volunteers, and the company wintered near the mouth of River Dubois, on the American side, opposite the entrance of the Missouri. While Lewis appears to have spent much time in the then village of St. Louis, consulting with French fur-traders and others conversant with the country, Clark was for the most part engaged at camp, accumulating stores and suitable craft for the long journey, and in organizing and disciplining the party — a somewhat sturdy task, this latter, for the court-martial records of the expedition reveal the fact that the young Kentucky riflemen whom Clark had gathered, were slow in bending their democratic necks to the military yoke. In March, Lewis was the chief official witness of the transfer of Upper Louisiana — at first from Spain to France, and then from France to the United States.

May 14, 1804, Clark started from the camp on the Dubois, "in the presence," he tells us in his journal, "of many of the neighboring inhabitants, and proceeded on under a jentle brease up the Missouri," picking up Lewis six days later at St. Charles, whose citizens hospitably entertained the adventurers.

The long and painful journey up the great river during the summer and autumn of 1804 was followed by a winter spent in log huts enclosed by a stout palisade, among the Mandan Indians, not far from the present Bismarck, North Dakota. Making a fresh start from Fort Mandan, upon the seventh of April, 1805, there ensued a toilsome experience all the way to the headspring of Jefferson Fork of the Missouri, which was reached August 12. Then came the crossing of the rugged, snow-clad Bitterroot Mountains, which here constitute the divide; and the descent of the foaming rapids and cataracts of the Columbia, until the Pacific was reached in November. By Christmas the party were safely housed within Fort Clatsop, a rude structure — like Fort Mandan, log huts within a palisade covering a plot of ground some fifty feet square.

Another dreary but busy winter was spent in studying the natives and making other scientific observations in the neighborhood, and filling their large note-books with these interesting data. This was not the season, however, for meeting any of the numerous trading mariners who frequented the Northwest Coast; thus the letter of credit given by Jefferson to the explorers proved useless, for lack of any one to whom it might be presented. For several months they were in dire straits, being obliged to exercise great ingenuity in making trinkets and in the rude practice of medicine and surgery, with which to obtain supplies from the avaricious natives.

Leaving Fort Clatsop the twenty-third of March, 1806, the return of the expedition was delayed by heavy snows on the mountainous divide, and much hardship was experienced. The actual crossing of the range commenced June 15. By the first of July the party had arrived at

Travellers' Rest Creek, where the over-mountain Indian trails converged, and here they divided into two sections — Lewis's party going direct to the Falls of the Missouri, and afterwards exploring Maria's River with a view to ascertaining its availability as a fur-trade route to the north; Clark and his contingent proceeding to the head of Missouri navigation of the year before, and then crossing over to the Yellowstone and descending that stream to its junction with the Missouri.

Parting company on the third of July, it was the twelfth of August before the two branches of the expedition reunited on the Missouri, several days below the mouth of the Yellowstone. Their final happy arrival at St. Louis, on the twenty-third of September, 1806, after an absence of two years, four months, and nine days, is one of the most familiar, and equally one of the most romantic and significant events in American history. "We were met by all the village and received a harty welcom from all its inhabitants, &c," is Clark's terse record of what must have been an hilarious popular demonstration. Would he might have seen this beautiful city on the present memorial day, and experienced the warmth of the affection in which his memory is still held at the close of the hundred years during which the trans-Mississippi wilderness that he and his brave companions opened to the world has developed into a seat of imperial wealth and power.

I should like to linger upon the curious and romantic story of the journals kept by Lewis and Clark and several of their forty-three companions; but time presses, and as the tale has lately been told at length,[1] it is left but briefly to allude to it. Upon their return, both of the two leaders began at once, here in St. Louis, to write out their notes for publication. But both were soon summoned to high office — Lewis being made governor of Louisiana Territory, and Clark its superintendent of Indian

[1] Introduction to *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*

affairs and brigadier-general of its militia.[1] The onerous duties appertaining to these new positions in the vast territory through which they had journeyed were necessarily absorbing; and neither being possessed of the literary habit, further progress towards publication was easily deferred.

Bancroft Library

Urged thereto by Jefferson, the originator and promoter of the expedition, Lewis began seriously to undertake the work; but he died (probably was murdered), the night of October 11, 1809, in a Tennessee wayside tavern at which he was stopping, en route to Philadelphia and Washington, where he intended at last to settle himself to the task. Clark, now the sole survivor, was promptly importuned from Monticello to assume charge of the undertaking, and finally engaged Nicholas Biddle, a young Philadelphia lawyer and financier of considerable literary experience, to edit the journals and prepare from them a popular narrative. This publication, after many strange adventures, finally appeared in 1814, eight years after the return of the expedition. It was, in many ways, an admirable piece of work, and has become an American historical and geographical classic. But it was not full enough, especially on the scientific side, to satisfy Jefferson, who sought to collect the original note-books for the use of some future historian of his great enterprise. Such as he gathered, were placed in the care of the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia; but it appears that Clark, unknown to Jefferson, retained at St. Louis a good share of his own notes, and nearly all of the numerous and admirable annotated maps and plans he had made en route. In due course of time — sixty years or more after his death —

[1] Upon the expedition, Lewis held a captaincy in the First Infantry. Clark had been promised a captaincy, but when his commission arrived it proved to be but a second lieutenancy of artillery, which somewhat piqued him; but he concluded to proceed, when assured by Lewis that the latter did not recognize any difference in rank between them. On their return, Clark resigned from the army on February 27, 1807, and Lewis on March 2. President Jefferson signed Lewis's commission as governor on March 3, Clark's commission being signed nine days later.

these drifted to New York City, and only a few years ago were by the present speaker discovered there in the possession of his heirs. Recently, and for the first time, practically all of the Lewis and Clark journals and the Clark maps have been published, a hundred years after they were written and drawn in the field.[1]

From these journals written day by day, abounding though t heyare in scientific data — concerning the botany, zoölogy, meteorology, geology, astronomy, ethnology, and geography of the Missouri and Columbia valleys — we obtain for the first time a vivid picture of the great explorers and their life. Their pages are aglow with human interest. The quiet, even temper of the camp; the loving consideration that the two leaders felt, each for the other; the magnanimity of Lewis — officially the leader, and chancing to hold a captain's commission while Clark, evidently through some clerical misunderstanding, was gazetted merely as a lieutenant — in equally dividing every honor with his friend, and making no move save by Clark's consent; the poetic temperament of Lewis, who loved flowers and animals, and in his notes discoursed like a philosopher who enjoyed the exercise of writing; the rugged character of Clark, who, less emotional but undoubtedly feeling deeply, wrote in brief, pointed, business-like phrases, and, less scholastic of the two, spelled phonetically, capitalized chaotically, and occasionally slipped in his grammar — all these, and more, are evident on every page; causing the reader deeply to admire the men, and to follow them in their often thrilling adventures with the keenest sympathy and admiration.

A hundred years ago, St. Louis was on the utmost Western frontier, and for many years after the Louisiana Purchase was the principal entrepôt for the rapidly-developing region of the trans-Mississippi. The dreamy little village necesssarily enjoyed intimate relations with the aborigines, a far-reaching fur-trade, and extensive transportation in-

[1] Thwaites, *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* (7 vols. and atlas).

terests along the great interlacing river systems of the Far West — over boundless grassy plains rolling to the horizon like the billows of the sea, across desert wastes gay in shadow but parched in the midday sun, and through rugged mountain cañons reaching tortuously to the sun-kissed slopes of the Pacific. Socially, St. Louis was an interesting medley of French, Spanish, and Americans, each with their distinct ideals; and here met North and South. This seat of Western dominion, its buoyant aspirations tempered by an old-fashioned conservatism, appealed strongly to these soberly-trained Virginians who had become imbued with a passion for pioneering. Thus Lewis and Clark, in settling down in Old St. Louis, found its life congenial, and at once became typical citizens, whom this modern cosmopolitan community does well to venerate.

Soon after Lewis's death, Gen. Benjamin Howard succeeded him (April 17, 1810), as governor of Louisiana Territory — Brigadier-General Clark becoming inspector-general of the Territorial militia and still retaining the superintendency of the Indians of the Territory, as well as the agency of the federal Indian Department. Upon the twelfth of December, 1812, the name of the Territory, which now contained a population of over 20,000, exclusive of Indians, was changed to Missouri, and Howard retired, being made a brigadier-general in the federal army. After a few months of interregnum, Clark was appointed by President Madison as governor of the new Territory (July 1, 1813), administering the office with great ability until Missouri entered the Union as a State (August 10, 1821). A candidate for popular election as governor of the new commonwealth, he was defeated by his old friend Colonel Alexander McNair,[1] then register of the United States Land Office at St. Louis; both men were widely known and had many admirers, but McNair was apparently the better politician of the two, moreover he had married into a prominent French family of the place. In May following, President Monroe appointed Clark as federal superintendent of Indian affairs,

[1] The vote stood: McNair, 6,576; Clark, 2,556.

an office newly created by Congress, and this post he filled until his death in 1838; although for a short time (1824–25), he also held the position of surveyor-general of Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas.

Ten months after General Clark had founded a home in St. Louis, he married (January 5, 1808), Miss Julia Hancock, daughter of Colonel George Hancock of Fincastle, Virginia, a charming young woman then only in her seventeenth year, of whom Clark had for some time been an ardent admirer, and for whom upon the great expedition he named one of the principal affluents of the Missouri "Judith's River" (now the Big Horn). She died in 1820 (June 27), leaving him five children.[1] Seventeen months later (Nov. 28, 1821), he married her first cousin (three years her senior), Mrs. Harriet Kennerly Radford, who died in 1831 (Dec. 25), having borne him two children.[2]

Amidst his numerous and often exacting official duties, Clark appears to have found time and opportunity to enter freely into the commercial side of life in Old St. Louis. In the newspaper press of the time we find frequent references to his somewhat extended dealings in city real estate. The brick mansion that he built (1818–19) on the corner of Main and Vine streets, not far from the site of the building in which he died and which we have this day marked by a beautiful memorial tablet, was one of the most imposing of early St. Louis residences. Within his adjoining block of brick houses on Main street, he constructed a large hall which for many years was used as a council room for Indian treaty conventions and talks; while upon its walls and in cases were displayed a very considerable col-

[1] Meriwether Lewis, born St. Louis, January 10, 1809, died at Frankfort, Ky., Oct. 28, 1881; William Preston, born St Louis, Oct. 5, 1811, died there May 16, 1840; Mary Margaret, born St. Louis, Jan. 1, 1814, died near Middleton, Ky., Oct. 15, 1821; George Rogers Hancock, born St. Louis, May 6, 1816, died at Minoma, St. Louis County, Oct. 2, 1858; John Julius, born St. Louis, July 6, 1818, died there Sept. 5, 1831.

[2] Jefferson Kearney, born St. Louis, February 29, 1824, died January 9, 1900, in New York City; Edmund, born St. Louis, Sept. 9, 1826, died there Aug. 12, 1827.

lection of Indian curiosities that was open to the public, being frequently alluded to in terms of admiration in the journals of travellers who visited this then frontier community. "Here were Indian dresses decorated with feathers; weapons, such as bows and arrows, battle clubs, and stone axes; birch-bark canoes, suspended from the ceiling; skins of animals; the bones of a mastodon; and other interesting specimen and relics."[1] This hall was also the scene of numerous banquets, patriotic celebrations, and other popular gatherings, thus largely entering into the daily life of St. Louis three-quarters of a century ago, and of itself well meriting to-day's memorial exercises.

The general was also prominent in the Indian fur-trade of the great region whose gates Lewis and himself had opened to commerce. In 1809, he in company with Manuel Lisa, Silvestre Labaddie, Pierre Chouteau Sr., Auguste Chouteau Jr., Reuben Lewis, and Benjamin Wilkinson, all of St. Louis, and other stockholders from neighboring States, organized the American Fur Company, capitalized at $27,000, to trade with the aborigines of the upper Missouri and the mountains beyond. Three years later, the capital stock was increased to $50,000, and the name changed to the Missouri Fur Company, an organization long dominating the trade of the Far West, and popularly accredited with considerable financial success.

It is an interesting revelation of one phase of his private character to find him, in documents of the period, assisting in the establishment of Christ Church in St. Louis, and thus becoming one of the founders of the Protestant Episcopal communion west of the Mississippi. In Christ Church Cathedral, an outgrowth of that early parish, there can to-day be seen a beautiful memorial window placed

[1] From note to the writer by Miss Eleanor Glasgow Voorhis, of New York City, great-grandaughter of General Clark, published in Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, xi, p. 263, Miss Voorhis relates that after Clark's death, the keeper of the museum, without authority or knowledge of the family, took the collection to England, and disposed of the specimens to his own profit.

there by his daughter-in-law, Eleanor Glasgow Clark; in memory of his son and her husband, George Rogers Hancock Clark.[1]

General Clark was great as an explorer, and doubtless it is in that capacity that posterity will chiefly view him. But in truth his services to his country as superintendent of Indian affairs in Louisiana and Missouri territories, and his career as governor, were quite as important, although less heralded. During the three decades of his superintendency, when American explorers and traders were first occupying the trans-Mississippi region, it was of the utmost importance to these civilizing agencies that the aborigines be kept at peace with our army of occupation. Upon the transcontinental expedition of 1804–06, Clark was the dominant figure in all negotiations with the Indians. Unlike Lewis, who while eloquent in his tribal talks, did not always please his native hearers,[2] Clark's manner was mild, affable, conciliatory, sympathetic, in which attitude he was much assisted by a benevolent, kindly countenance, and large expressive eyes, which inevitably inspired confidence. His skillful diplomacy upon the tour, to which every page of the Original Journals bears unconscious but eloquent witness, was continued in his capacity as superintendent. The result was, that between the mouths of the Missouri and the Columbia, he was venerated by scores of tribes, among whom the word of "Red Head," as he was affectionately styled, became law.

[1] On the left side of the chancel, near the organ.

[2] In his journal, given in L. R. Masson, *Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (Quebec, 1889), i, p. 336, the explorer Charles Mackenzie, who met Lewis and Clark at Fort Mandan in the winter of 1804–05, says: "Mr. La Rocque and I * * * became intimate with the gentlemen of the American expedition, who on all occasions seemed happy to see us, and always treated us with civility and kindness. It is true, Captain Lewis could not make himself agreeable to us. He could speak fluently and learnedly on all subjects, but his inveterate disposition against the British stained, at least in our eyes, all his eloquence. Captain Clarke was equally well-informed, but his conversation was always pleasant, for he seemed to dislike giving offense unnecessarily."

Clark's reputation for stern integrity, for absolute purity of private character, for sympathy with the unfortunate, for advocacy of the rights of men, whether red or white, mingled with his capacity for swiftly administering needed retribution, was of the utmost importance in a vast border region wherein the original inhabitants were being slowly but surely, and not always gently, ousted by the vanguard of civilization, and where the worst elements among both whites and reds might at any moment precipitate widespread conflict. Through these troubled waters, General and Governor Clark safely steered the course of the Great West. Whether in times of peace or of war — his splendid services on the frontier in the War of 1812–15 were alone enough to win him the nation's gratitude — he was for the thirty-one years of his official career in more senses than one the dominant figure in your midst. When, upon the site dedicated by this afternoon's ceremonies, he passed from this life on the first of September, 1838, aged sixty-eight years and one month, his demise was sincerely mourned by both races, throughout the northern half of the trans-Mississippi.

You do well to honor him to-day. Republics are charged with being ungrateful. This is but a superficial view. A monarchy has well-organized machinery for the official recognition of its worthy servants. In a democratic government, we perforce leave to popular action the placing of laurels on our heroes' brows, and such action is necessarily spasmodic and uncertain. The republic is surely as grateful as the monarchy for noble deeds in the public cause, although less frequently giving formal expression to its sentiment. We need to cultivate this practice among us, as a people. Not that heroes are actually made by the affixing of medals, or by the expectation of popular applause; but the generous recognition of high public service, past or present, awakens within us all that civic and national pride in our past, that historic self-consciousness as a people, that is the sure foundation of patriotism.

It is not given to many cities of the West, to harbor such precious historic traditions as those clustering around Old St. Louis. But amidst all your rich heritage of glowing memory, no single event was quite so pregnant with far-reaching consequences as the expedition of Lewis and Clark, first and in many respects greatest of all explorations undertaken by our federal government. You to-day celebrate its safe and successful return to its point of departure, and incidentally honor yourselves in especially recognizing St. Louis's debt of gratitude to one of her noblest citizens, William Clark — soldier, explorer, statesman, benefactor of his race.

COO